

New Vice-County Records for British Ants

C. A. COLLINGWOOD

It is proposed shortly to bring out a chart of the vice-county distribution of indigenous British ants in collaboration with Mr. K. E. J. Barrett. In order to make this as up to date and comprehensive as possible, it is to be hoped that interested collectors will send in or publish any outstanding records that are believed to be new. Several recent publications (Yarrow 1954, 1955; Collingwood, 1956, 1957, 1958) have referred to the distribution of species of *Formica*, *Lasius*, *Myrmica* and other genera and some of the records in these publications are amplified where appropriate in the following notes. Only the Irish list (Collingwood, 1958) and that for the Highlands of Scotland (Collingwood, 1961 in the press) can be said to be up to date and there remains an accumulation of unpublished records over the past few years as well as confirmations of some of the older records given by Donisthorpe, 1927. This information is presented here with details of place and date only given in the case of the more local or interesting species; it is obvious that it is only a question of opportunity and time before such ubiquitous species as *Myrmica ruginodis* Nyl., *M. Scabrinodis* Nyl. and *Leptothorax acervorum* Fab. are recorded for every vice-county in the British Isles. All the records listed are mine unless stated otherwise.

Tetramorium caespitum Latr. W. Sutherland—Scourie, July, 1949: W. Norfolk—Thetford Warren, 1958; W. Kent—Dungeness, 1959; Midlothian, Greville 1858 in Royal Scottish Museum.

Solenopsis fugax Latr. N. Somerset—Goblin Coombe and Brean Down, August, 1960.

Formicoxenus nitidulus Nyl. Cantire—Ellory, June, 1957. Derby—Eyam, 1955. Notts—Wigsley, 1955. N. Lines—Tumby, 1955. S. Devon—R. M. Spooner, 1958 pers. commun. also Lustleigh, 1960. W. Glos—Lower Staunton, 1957.

Myrmecina graminicola Latr. Northants—Barnack, 1956. Although widely distributed over the southern counties, there are still distribution gaps which include W. Cornwall, S. Somerset, Wilts. and certain of the Eastern Counties where the species is very likely to occur.

Leptothorax acervorum Fab. 1956—S. Wilts; Mid W. Yorks; W. Suffolk; Pembroke; Monmouth; Cardigan; Montgomery; Westernness; Cantire. 1958—Hunts; 1960—Selkirk; N. Wilts; N. Somerset; N. Devon. This widely distributed species has still to be recorded from a few counties in Ireland and Wales and also from W. Cornwall, N. Essex, Hertford, E. Suffolk, Mid Lanes and N.W. Yorks in England.

Leptothorax nylanderi Foerst. W. Norfolk—Harling, 1958. Cambridge—Kennett, 1958. W. Kent—Knowle Park, 1959. E. Kent—

Charing, 1959. S. Wilts—Whiteparish, 1960. N. Hants—Eversley, 1960. E. Suffolk—Flatford Mill, 1958. This ant is not uncommon inland in S. England from Gloucestershire to Essex but seems to be scarce in the Southwest where there are only records for S. Devon.

Leptothorax tuborum Fab. W. Glos—Durdham Down, Bacchus in Donisthorpe, (1927). This record appeared doubtful to me at one time but I have seen the specimens in the National Museum of Wales. N. Somerset—Goblin Coombe, August, 1960. This species is almost confined to the coast in England. Donisthorpe (1927) recorded it from Worcs., Middlesex and Surrey. The Worcs. record was in error and old museum material I have seen from Surrey have always been *L. nylanderii*. It is best to delete these records pending further substantiated specimens. There are no recent records from Cornwall where the species should be quite common.

Leptothorax interruptus Nyl. There are no new records for this species but it is perhaps worth noting here that in addition to Bere Heath, Dorset, where Sweeney (1949) found it, the ant is quite common in an area of Stoke Heath about 2 miles to the south.

Myrmica ruginodis Nyl. 1956—W. Perth; Angus; N. and S. Aberdeen; Banff; Cantire; Westernness; Montgomery; Carmarthen; W. Norfolk; W. Suffolk; S. Wilts. 1958—Clyde Isles, A. R. Waterston (Royal Scottish Museum); Hunts. 1960—Selkirk. This ant is now recorded from every county and island group in the British Isles with the exception of Fermanagh in Ireland.

Myrmica rubra L. (*aevinodis* Nyl.) 1956—Mid W. Yorks; Carmarthen; Angus; Derby. 1957—W. Ross, A. W. Stelfox (also 1959). 1958—W. Suffolk, W. Norfolk, Hunts. 1959—Montgomery, L. Weatherill; Merioneth, L. Weatherill. 1960—N. Wilts; S. Wilts. This common species is still to be recorded from Cheviotland as well as a few counties in Scotland and Ireland.

Myrmica sulcinodis Nyl. N. Aberdeen—Coreen Hills, 1956. Banff—Glenlivet, 1956. N.E. Yorks—Staithes, etc., 1956. Mid-W. Yorks—Pately Br., 1956. Durham—Stanhope, 1956. S. Northumberland—Slaley, 1956. Stafford—Warslow, 1957. S. Perth—Braco, 1959. S.W. Yorks—Ravensmoor, 1957. Cheviotland—Alnwick, 1960. S. Wilts—Redlynch, 1960. Angus—Glen Esk, 1960. Kincardine—Glen Dye, 1960. A very old record for Cornwall requires confirmation and two old records for Glamorgan and Anglesey respectively remain unsubstantiated. These are best deleted together with the Irish records which Stelfox (1927) showed were erroneous.

Myrmica scabrinodis Nyl. 1956—Cantire; N.W. Yorks; S.W. Yorks; Montgomery; W. Suffolk; W. Norfolk; Hunts. S. Wilts. 1958—Clyde Isles, S. Ebrides, Outer Hebrides (S. Uist), Royal Scottish Museum. This species is now recorded from the whole of Britain except Lanark, Peebles, Selkirk, Orkney and Fermanagh.

Myrmica sabuleti Mein. 1956—Angus; N.W. Yorks; Carmarthen; Montgomery; S. Lines; Leics. 1957—Dumbarton, A. W. Stelfox; W. Norfolk; Cambridge; Midlothian (Salisbury Crags, 1924), Royal Scottish Museum. 1959—Merioneth; E. Kent; W. Kent. 1960—S. Wilts. W. Cornwall, H. B. Sargent. There are still many gaps in the recorded distribution of this common species.

Myrmica schencki Em. N. Somerset—Shapwick, August, 1960.

Myrmica lobicornis Nyl. Cantire—Bellochantuy, Artiligan, 1956.

S. Lincs—Boston, 1956. S. Aberdeen—Glenlui, 1957. E. Glos—Stow-on-the-Wold, 1957. Banff—Portknockie, 1960.

Tapinoma erraticum Latr. S. Wilts—Plaitford, Hamptsworth, 1960. This area of Wiltshire is part of the New Forest where the species abounds. An old record for Dumfries quoted by Donisthorpe (1927) is unconfirmed and unlikely. I have seen examples of *Lasius niger* in the Royal Scottish Museum labelled as *T. erraticum*.

Lasius fuliginosus Latr. Merioneth—Abertafol, Towyn, Happy Valley, L. Weatherill, 1959. Old records have recently been confirmed for Caernarvon, Denbigh, Glamorgan, Northants, W. Suffolk, W. Norfolk, W. and E. Sussex. This species appears to be locally common in the Gower and parts of West Wales and is noticeably abundant throughout the Thetford area of Suffolk and Norfolk.

Lasius niger L. 1956—Cantire, Main Argyll, Westernness, Kincardine, Banff, Elgin, Cheviotland, Cardigan, Montgomery. 1957—Radnor, S. Wilts. Old records are also confirmed for Roxburgh, W. Ross, S.W. Yorks, W. Norfolk, W. Suffolk, N. Hants, E. Kent, E. Cornwall, N. Wilts, N. and S. Devon, S. Lincs, Leics, Notts and Mid Lincs. This common ant is recorded from every vice-county of England and Wales and most of Scotland except Peebles, Selkirk, Angus, W. Sutherland, Caithness and the outer islands.

Lasius alienus Foerst. Northants—Barnack, 1956. E. Glos—Painswick, 1956. Radnor—Presteign, 1957. N. Lincs—Gibraltar Point; 1958; this series consists of males, queens and workers taken in a sand bank; they have the appearance of exceptionally hairless *L. niger* but have very few to no standing appendage hairs and would key to *L. alienus* according to Wilson (1955). W. Cornwall—Kynance, 1959. S. Wilts—Hamptsworth, 1960.

Lasius flavus Fab. 1956—Banff; N. Aberdeen; Kincardine; Angus; Westernness; Cantire; N.E. Yorks; Mid W. Yorks; Carmarthen; W. Suffolk; W. Norfolk; S. Wilts. 1957—Hunts. There are also specimens for Roxburgh and Selkirk in the Royal Scottish Museum. This species which in terms of numbers must be the most abundant ant in Britain remains to be recorded from S. Aberdeen, E. and W. Sutherland and the outer islands.

Lasius umbratus Nyl. sensu Donisthorpe (1927). S. Lincs—Ancaster, Uffington, 1956. Leics—N. Luffenham, Elpingham, 1956. Northants—Thrapston, 1958. W. Norfolk—Thetford Chase, J. E. Satchell, 1958. N. Somerset—Goblin Coombe, 1960. There is also a specimen in the Royal Scottish Museum from Arthur's Seat, Midlothian.

Lasius mixtus Nyl. sensu Donisthorpe (1927). I am provisionally retaining this name for record purposes pending further discussion of this species complex to be given later. Recent new records for *L. mixtus* include E. Glos—Aston Blank, 1956. Northants—Wansford, 1956. Barnack, 1958. Leics—Elpingham, 1956. Wigtown—Luce Bay, 1957 (also in Royal Scottish Museum). W. Kent—Bedgebury, J. E. Satchell, 1958.

Lasius rabaudi Bond. W. Norfolk—Sandringham, Thetford Warren, 1957. W. Suffolk—West Stow, Wordswell, 1957. Thetford, 1958, J. E. Satchell. This species has been repeatedly found on heathland in Surrey and is also locally common in similar areas of sandy heath in East Anglia. Its British distribution would appear to be restricted to such areas but it has not yet been found in similar situations in the

New Forest, Dorset and Devon where it is likely to occur.

Formica sanguinea Latr. S. Aberdeen, Kincardine, O'Neil, 1958.

Formica exsecta Nyl. E. Ross—Amat, L. Christie, 1954.

Formica rufa L. Caernarvon—Trefri, L. Weatherill, 1957. This is an interesting record in that *F. lugubris*, the more northern species of wood ant, is known to be locally abundant in the same general area. Hamptsworth, Franchise Wood, S. Wilts, 1960.

Formica lugubris Zett. Main Argyll, Port Appin, E. C. Pelham Clinton, 1958; Clenborrodale, 1959; E. Sutherland—Invershin, 1960.

Formica fusca L. Carmarthen; Cardigan; Derby—Melbourne, 1956. Main Argyll—Glenmore (Ardnamurchan); Westernness—Loch Hourn, 1959. These two Scottish records extend the known distribution of this species considerably northward. In S. England, it has still to be recorded from Herts and Hunts.

Formica lemani Bond. Wexford, W. Cornwall, specimens in the National Museum of Wales; Selkirk, 1960. This species inhabits the whole of North Britain and Wales but there are no records for S.E. Yorks and Pembroke. The only unrecorded counties in Ireland are Westmeath, Offaly and Leix. In S. England it is more or less restricted to the higher ground in the Southwest peninsula.

Formica cunicularia Latr. S. Lincs.—Wilsford, 1957. West Cornwall—Kynance, 1960. N. Wilts—West Kingston, 1960. S. Wilts—Redlynch, Hamptsworth, 1960. N. Somerset—Brean Down, 1960. Of the more southern English counties where this species should occur, there are still no records from N. Hants, Berks and W. Sussex.

I am grateful to the persons named after particular records for information or specimens supplied and also to Mr. Colin Matheson of the National Museum of Wales and to Mr. A. R. Waterston of the Royal Scottish Museum for permission to examine collections there.

REFERENCES.

- Collingwood, C. A. 1956. Distribution of ants allied to *Formica fusca* L. and *F. rufa* L. in Britain. *Entom.*, **89**: 291-4.
- . 1957. British Ants of the genus *Lasius*. *Journ. Soc. Brit. Ent.*, **5**: 204-14.
- . 1958. A Survey of Irish Formicidae. *Proc. R. Ir. Acad.*, **11**: 213-19.
- . 1958. Ants of the genus *Myrmica* in Britain. *Proc. R. Ent. Soc. Lond. A.*, **33**: 65-75.
- . 1959? A Key to the species of ants (Hym. Formicidae) found in Britain. *Trans. Soc. Brit. Ent.*
- . 1961. Ants in the Highlands of Scotland. *Scot. Nat.* (in Press).
- Donisthorpe. 1927. British Ants. 2nd Ed. London.
- Stelfox, A. W. 1927. A list of the Hymenoptera Aculeata of Ireland. *Proc. R. Ir. Acad.*, **37**: 338.
- Sweeney, R. C. H. 1949. Two rare ants in Dorset. *Ent. Mon. Mag.*, **85**: 285.
- Wilson, E. O. 1958. A monographic revision of the ant genus *Lasius*. *Bull. Mus. Comp. Zool.*, **113** (1): 1-199. Cambridge, U.S.A.
- Yarrow, I. H. H. 1954. The British Ants allied to *Formica fusca* Hym. Formicidae. *Trans. Soc. Brit. Ent.*, **11**: 229-244.
- . 1958. The British Ants Allied to *Formica rufa* L. Hym. Formicidae. *Trans. Soc. Brit. Ent.*, **12**: 1-48.

N.A.A.S., Burghill Road, Westbury-on-Trym, Bristol. 1.iii.61.